

NSC BRIEFING

4 December 1957

BRIEFING NOTE ON NIE 11-4-57

We have just completed our annual five-year estimate of Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1957-1962.

- I. After four years of uneasy collective leadership Khrushchev has emerged as clearly dominant and Party has asserted mastery over economic bureaucracy and military.
- II. Result is stability of Soviet leadership enhanced. But, considering risks of failure in bold programs K. has undertaken, threats to his position could arise.
- III. Present phase of Soviet external policy "designed to achieve certain important though limited objectives, while avoiding any substantial risks of nuclear war and providing time for further forced draft growth of Soviet power."
 - A. At same time, however, Soviets probably confident their own growing strength increasingly deterring West along same lines. As result USSR "probably regards itself as achieving progressively greater freedom of maneuver in local situations. USSR might go so far in certain situations as to support indigenous forces in local actions or even send volunteers--judging that grave risk of general war would not result. Thus risks of general war through miscalculation may increase.
 - B. But Soviets will probably in general continue to prefer non-military means of achieving objectives, they will intensify efforts to woo under-developed countries, especially in Asia and Africa.

IV. Despite their many problems, we foresee further rapid growth in Soviet power over next five years.

A. Economic growth will average 6% annually, faster than that of US, though slower than during 5th Five Year Plan. Further rapid scientific and technological progress also likely.

B. Notable progress in advanced weapons, especially in variety of improved nuclear weapons, and missiles (will report when new estimate completed).

C. On other hand, marked reductions in our estimates on heavy bombers and submarines.

1. Most of IAC believe USSR will level off at around 400-600 heavy bombers and tankers around mid-1960 (with Army and JIG preferring lower figure) but Air Force believes USSR wants 400-600 bombers plus 300-500 tankers.

2. Huge sub-building program tapering off, probably because of shift to nuclear propelled and missile types. By mid-1962 USSR could probably have about 20 nuclear subs and about 50 missile-launching subs, including nuclear types.